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County Employment and Wages in Alabama – Second Quarter 2016

Employment increased in five of Alabama's six largest counties from June 2015 to June 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2015 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that employment increases ranged from 2.7 percent in Madison County to 0.6 percent in Jefferson and Shelby Counties. Employment in Tuscaloosa County declined 0.2 percent over the year. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, employment advanced 1.5 percent from June 2015 to June 2016 as 291 of the 344 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Williamson, Tenn., recorded the largest percentage increase, up 6.7 percent over the year. Midland, Texas, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment among the largest counties in the U.S. with a loss of 8.3 percent.

Among the six largest counties in Alabama, employment was highest in Jefferson (341,200) in June 2016, while Shelby had the smallest employment (84,500). Together, Alabama's large counties accounted for 52.6 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 142.7 million in June 2016.

Five of Alabama's six large counties had over-the-year wage increases with Shelby County (2.8 percent) experiencing the largest increase. Madison County had the highest average weekly wage among the state's six largest counties at \$1,050. Nationally, the average weekly wage was \$989, a 2.2 percent increase from a year ago. (See [table 1.](#))

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 61 counties in Alabama with employment below 75,000. Average weekly wages in these counties ranged from \$1,117 to \$571. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages advanced in five of Alabama's largest counties from the second quarter of 2015 to the second quarter of 2016. Shelby's 2.8-percent wage increase ranked 107th among the nation's 344 largest counties and was the only large county in Alabama to rank in the top third of the national ranking. Average weekly wage growth in Alabama's four other large counties ranged from 2.3 to 0.1 percent. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, 304 of the 344 largest counties had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. McLean, Ill., had the largest wage increase among the largest U.S. counties (21.0 percent). Elkhart, Ind., was second with a wage increase of 8.5 percent, followed by the counties of King, Wash. (8.1 percent); Washington, Ore. (7.4 percent); and Albany, N.Y. (7.0 percent).

Of the 344 largest counties, 36 had over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Ventura, Calif., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages (-8.4 percent), followed by Forsyth, N.C. (-6.5 percent); Lafayette, La. (-6.2 percent); Gregg, Texas (-3.7 percent); and Midland, Texas (-3.2 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 3 of Alabama's 6 largest counties placed in the top half of the national ranking among the 344 largest counties in the second quarter of 2016. Madison County's average weekly wage of \$1,050 was above the U.S. average of \$989, and ranked 70th nationwide. Jefferson County (\$967) and Shelby County (\$922), ranked 122nd and 161st, respectively. Average weekly wages in the remaining three counties placed in the bottom half of the national ranking.

Nationwide, average weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average in 102 of the 344 largest counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,252. San Mateo, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,871, followed by New York, N.Y. (\$1,866).

Seventy percent of the largest U.S. counties (241) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the second quarter of 2016. Horry, S.C. (\$598) had the lowest weekly wage, followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$602) and Hidalgo (\$626).

Average weekly wages in Alabama's smaller counties

Among the 61 counties in Alabama with employment below 75,000, Washington (\$1,117) and Dale (\$1,010) were the only two counties that had a weekly wage above the national average of \$989. Perry County had the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$571 in the second quarter of 2016. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 67 counties in Alabama were considered, 23 reported average weekly wages under \$650, 24 had wages from \$650-\$749, 12 had wages from \$750-\$849, and 8 had wages above \$850. (See [chart 1](#).)

Additional statistics and other information

Quarterly data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the [Technical Note](#) or visit the QCEW Web site at <https://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2015 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2016 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2015* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn15.htm.

The County Employment and Wages release for third quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, March 7, 2017.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.7 million employer reports cover 142.7 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200, Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 6 largest counties in Alabama, second quarter 2016

| Area | Employment | | | Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾ | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | June 2016 (thousands) | Percent change, June 2015-16 ⁽²⁾ | National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾ | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level ⁽³⁾ | Percent change, second quarter 2015-16 ⁽²⁾ | National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾ |
| United States ⁽⁴⁾ | 142,717.2 | 1.5 | -- | \$989 | -- | 2.2 | -- |
| Alabama | 1,923.5 | 1.2 | -- | 835 | 37 | 2.0 | 29 |
| Jefferson, Ala. | 341.2 | 0.6 | 257 | 967 | 122 | 2.3 | 172 |
| Madison, Ala. | 191.7 | 2.7 | 76 | 1,050 | 70 | -0.2 | 311 |
| Mobile, Ala. | 170.3 | 1.4 | 179 | 844 | 239 | 2.2 | 181 |
| Montgomery, Ala. | 132.0 | 1.7 | 148 | 834 | 250 | 1.5 | 241 |
| Shelby, Ala. | 84.5 | 0.6 | 257 | 922 | 161 | 2.8 | 107 |
| Tuscaloosa, Ala. | 91.2 | -0.2 | 303 | 811 | 276 | 0.1 | 304 |

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Alabama, second quarter 2016

| Area | Employment June 2016 | Average Weekly Wage(1) |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| United States(2) | 142,717,157 | \$989 |
| Alabama | 1,923,544 | 835 |
| Autauga | 10,755 | 681 |
| Baldwin | 73,741 | 637 |
| Barbour | 7,888 | 665 |
| Bibb | 4,198 | 754 |
| Blount | 8,196 | 632 |
| Bullock | 2,999 | 623 |
| Butler | 6,853 | 631 |
| Calhoun | 43,831 | 714 |
| Chambers | 7,919 | 671 |
| Cherokee | 5,119 | 620 |
| Chilton | 9,434 | 646 |
| Choctaw | 3,326 | 901 |
| Clarke | 8,255 | 709 |
| Clay | 3,869 | 619 |
| Cleburne | 2,211 | 813 |
| Coffee | 15,245 | 621 |
| Colbert | 24,009 | 795 |
| Conecuh | 3,483 | 650 |
| Coosa | 1,363 | 638 |
| Covington | 12,227 | 650 |
| Crenshaw | 3,826 | 691 |
| Cullman | 28,958 | 693 |
| Dale | 16,855 | 1,010 |
| Dallas | 12,603 | 676 |
| DeKalb | 21,023 | 647 |
| Elmore | 19,824 | 642 |
| Escambia | 12,969 | 699 |
| Etowah | 36,569 | 672 |
| Fayette | 4,084 | 604 |
| Franklin | 10,309 | 645 |
| Geneva | 5,095 | 597 |
| Greene | 1,761 | 624 |
| Hale | 2,760 | 667 |
| Henry | 3,147 | 710 |
| Houston | 46,841 | 745 |
| Jackson | 16,447 | 665 |
| Jefferson | 341,187 | 967 |
| Lamar | 3,437 | 699 |
| Lauderdale | 29,243 | 620 |
| Lawrence | 4,790 | 608 |
| Lee | 56,392 | 692 |
| Limestone | 22,139 | 873 |
| Lowndes | 2,452 | 858 |
| Macon | 4,685 | 784 |
| Madison | 191,694 | 1,050 |
| Marengo | 6,999 | 754 |
| Marion | 9,738 | 626 |
| Marshall | 35,969 | 643 |
| Mobile | 170,250 | 844 |
| Monroe | 6,122 | 772 |
| Montgomery | 131,996 | 834 |
| Morgan | 47,264 | 828 |
| Perry | 2,034 | 571 |
| Pickens | 3,787 | 689 |

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Alabama, second quarter 2016 - Continued

| Area | Employment June 2016 | Average Weekly Wage(1) |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Pike | 13,908 | 770 |
| Randolph | 4,682 | 614 |
| Russell..... | 13,553 | 670 |
| St. Clair..... | 19,412 | 671 |
| Shelby | 84,477 | 922 |
| Sumter..... | 3,016 | 716 |
| Talladega | 29,110 | 848 |
| Tallapoosa | 13,804 | 586 |
| Tuscaloosa | 91,205 | 811 |
| Walker | 18,250 | 665 |
| Washington..... | 3,613 | 1,117 |
| Wilcox | 2,677 | 749 |
| Winston | 7,443 | 642 |

Footnotes(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, second quarter 2016

| State | Employment | | Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾ | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | June 2016 (thousands) | Percent change, June 2015-16 | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level | Percent change, second quarter 2015-16 | National ranking by percent change |
| United States ⁽²⁾ | 142,717.2 | 1.5 | \$989 | -- | 2.2 | -- |
| Alabama | 1,923.5 | 1.2 | 835 | 37 | 2.0 | 29 |
| Alaska | 338.7 | -2.4 | 1,011 | 10 | -1.7 | 49 |
| Arizona | 2,619.6 | 2.6 | 921 | 22 | 1.9 | 33 |
| Arkansas | 1,197.5 | 1.1 | 785 | 47 | 3.0 | 7 |
| California | 16,754.1 | 2.5 | 1,157 | 5 | 2.4 | 19 |
| Colorado | 2,574.5 | 2.3 | 999 | 14 | 1.0 | 43 |
| Connecticut | 1,689.9 | -0.1 | 1,213 | 3 | 3.0 | 7 |
| Delaware | 444.0 | 0.9 | 990 | 16 | -0.6 | 48 |
| District of Columbia | 756.0 | 1.7 | 1,623 | 1 | 1.1 | 42 |
| Florida | 8,161.8 | 3.2 | 883 | 25 | 2.6 | 14 |
| Georgia | 4,269.5 | 2.7 | 929 | 21 | 2.7 | 11 |
| Hawaii | 643.4 | 1.0 | 906 | 24 | 3.5 | 5 |
| Idaho | 699.7 | 3.3 | 740 | 50 | 3.8 | 3 |
| Illinois | 5,945.0 | 0.2 | 1,038 | 9 | 2.4 | 19 |
| Indiana | 2,995.4 | 1.0 | 828 | 39 | 2.1 | 27 |
| Iowa | 1,566.0 | 0.3 | 825 | 40 | 2.9 | 9 |
| Kansas | 1,378.4 | -0.2 | 829 | 38 | 1.2 | 39 |
| Kentucky | 1,877.2 | 1.5 | 838 | 36 | 1.9 | 33 |
| Louisiana | 1,905.2 | -1.4 | 852 | 32 | 0.2 | 46 |
| Maine | 622.8 | 1.0 | 795 | 46 | 3.5 | 5 |
| Maryland | 2,656.0 | 0.9 | 1,070 | 8 | 2.5 | 15 |
| Massachusetts | 3,538.2 | 1.2 | 1,233 | 2 | 2.0 | 29 |
| Michigan | 4,300.9 | 1.9 | 942 | 19 | 2.7 | 11 |
| Minnesota | 2,846.8 | 0.7 | 997 | 15 | 2.0 | 29 |
| Mississippi | 1,120.1 | 0.5 | 727 | 51 | 2.5 | 15 |
| Missouri | 2,785.6 | 1.4 | 863 | 30 | 2.4 | 19 |
| Montana | 468.6 | 2.2 | 767 | 48 | 1.7 | 35 |
| Nebraska | 978.3 | 0.9 | 805 | 43 | 2.4 | 19 |
| Nevada | 1,289.4 | 3.3 | 874 | 27 | 2.2 | 26 |
| New Hampshire | 655.1 | 1.1 | 1,003 | 12 | 3.7 | 4 |
| New Jersey | 4,051.2 | 1.7 | 1,147 | 6 | 1.7 | 35 |
| New Mexico | 808.1 | -0.3 | 812 | 42 | 0.9 | 44 |
| New York | 9,264.0 | 1.5 | 1,210 | 4 | 2.5 | 15 |
| North Carolina | 4,285.3 | 2.5 | 865 | 29 | 2.1 | 27 |
| North Dakota | 423.3 | -4.9 | 908 | 23 | -3.3 | 51 |
| Ohio | 5,353.1 | 0.8 | 882 | 26 | 2.0 | 29 |
| Oklahoma | 1,570.5 | -1.4 | 823 | 41 | 0.6 | 45 |
| Oregon | 1,867.8 | 2.7 | 933 | 20 | 4.1 | 2 |
| Pennsylvania | 5,786.8 | 0.4 | 971 | 17 | 1.4 | 37 |
| Rhode Island | 482.9 | 0.6 | 949 | 18 | 2.5 | 15 |
| South Carolina | 2,013.7 | 2.4 | 804 | 44 | 2.8 | 10 |
| South Dakota | 432.7 | 1.0 | 760 | 49 | 2.7 | 11 |
| Tennessee | 2,900.4 | 2.4 | 874 | 27 | 1.3 | 38 |
| Texas | 11,810.7 | 1.0 | 1,000 | 13 | 1.2 | 39 |
| Utah | 1,395.9 | 3.8 | 840 | 35 | 2.3 | 25 |
| Vermont | 310.6 | -0.1 | 850 | 33 | 2.4 | 19 |
| Virginia | 3,833.4 | 1.6 | 1,011 | 10 | 1.2 | 39 |
| Washington | 3,281.6 | 2.8 | 1,083 | 7 | 5.4 | 1 |
| West Virginia | 693.2 | -1.9 | 800 | 45 | -0.4 | 47 |
| Wisconsin | 2,869.1 | 0.9 | 856 | 31 | 2.4 | 19 |
| Wyoming | 281.7 | -3.7 | 849 | 34 | -2.2 | 50 |
| Puerto Rico | 879.5 | -0.7 | 512 | (3) | 0.2 | (3) |

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, second quarter 2016 - Continued

| State | Employment | | Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾ | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | June 2016 (thousands) | Percent change, June 2015-16 | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level | Percent change, second quarter 2015-16 | National ranking by percent change |
| Virgin Islands | 38.4 | 0.9 | 743 | (3) | -0.4 | (3) |

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Alabama, second quarter 2016

